Goal Attainment Scaling

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What is 'Goal Attainment Scaling?'

- Goal attainment scaling (GAS) is an individualized approach for measuring the achievement of goals (King et al., 1999).

- GAS was originally developed to assess adults in a community mental health setting, but has since been applied to numerous practice areas, including education, health, and social work (MacKay, Somerville, & Lundie, 1996).

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Goal Attainment Scaling Method

- The original GAS scale uses a 5-point scale, ranging from -2 to +2, with zero representing the expected level of performance after intervention.

Levels	Kiresuk, Smith, & Cardillo (1994)
- 2	Much less than expected outcome
- 1	Somewhat less than expected outcome
0	Projected level of performance
+1	Somewhat more than expected outcome
+2	Much more than expected outcome

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Alternative Methods

Levels	King et al. (1999)
- 2	Baseline
- 1	Less than expected
0	Expected level
+1	Greater than expected
+2	Much greater than expected

Levels	Steenbeek et al. (2007)
+2	A lot more
+1	A little more
0	As expected
-1	Partially achieved
-2	Same as baseline
-3	Worse

Levels	
1	No change
2	Small improvement
3	Interest in goal
4	Takes some action towards goal
5	Maintains new behavior
6	Committed to achieving goal
7	Achieves goal

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Our preferred format:

I LOST GROUND 0	
Where I am right now. 1	
I'm getting close to my goal. 2	
I reached my goal! 3	
I did better than expected! 4	

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Applying Goal Attainment Scaling in Practice

Involves…

1. Identifying the overall *objective*
2. Identifying the specific *challenge areas* that should be supported
3. Specifically identifying the *behaviors or events* that will indicate improvement in each area selected
4. Determining the *methodology* that will be used to collect the desired information
5. Identifying *outcomes* for scaling
6. Determining the student's *current status* and how progress will be measured

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Advantages of using Goal Attainment Scaling with Project SEARCH

- Provides a quantitative measure of outcome
- Can be used to compare a student's progress over time
- Can be used to compare performances across students in the same program (Ottenbacher & Cusick, 1989)
- Allows for a collaborative approach-working with the student to set realistic goals
- Provides flexibility for measuring diverse outcomes

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Limitations of Goal Attainment Scaling

- It is important to be aware of the potential limitations prior to implementation
  - Scaling can be a time-consuming process
  - Biases can occur in goal setting, scaling, and rating
  - Temptation to modify goals throughout the course of intervention

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What is the Student's Overall Objective?

- Setting your expected level of outcome or the desired goal:
  - For example, you and the student may agree that developing self-advocacy skills is the overall goal.

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What are the student's specific challenge areas?

- Requires prioritizing areas of concern and formulating goals that are SMART.

- When goal objectives are prioritized they are given a weight, which is used to convert the scale score into a standard score.

School/Work

Health

Daily Living

Relationships

Community/Recreation

Spirituality/Purpose

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SMART Goals

- **S**pecific= *a specific goal has a much greater chance of being achieved. It is the who, what, where, when, which and why of the goal.*

- **M**easurable=*establish concrete criteria for measuring progress.*

- **A**ttainable=*help students set goals that are meaningful to them and that they want to achieve.*

- **R**elevant=*a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work.*

- **T**ime-specific=*a goal should be grounded within a time-frame.*

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SMART Goals

- Reminder – must be measurable, but also realistic!
- Ask yourself:
  - Can I reasonably measure goal attainment with the goals my student and I have established?
  - Are the objectives we've established significantly different and of equal increments?
  - Am I measuring a change in behavior or skill development?

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What behaviors and skills will indicate improvement?

- This step involves creating a scale that will be useful for measuring changes in performance

- For the student working on self advocacy skills, this may involve creating a scale based on the number of times the student expresses or communicates his/her needs in the workplace

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Tips for Scaling Goals

- Select the expected level of performance
- Identify the range of potential outcomes
- Again, it is important to set objectives that are SMART
- The scale intervals should be as equal as possible

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How to write GOALS

Goal Attainment Scaling Worksheet

Goal: _____

NUMERICAL LEVEL: **DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL OF GOAL ATTAINMENT:**

I LOST GROUND 0	
Where I am right now. 1	
I'm getting close to my goal. 2	
I reached my goal! 3	
I did better than expected! 4	

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Goal Attainment Scaling Worksheet Example

Goal: **Self-advocating for needs with work supervisors when feeling overwhelmed**

NUMERICAL LEVEL:	DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL OF GOAL ATTAINMENT:
I lost ground 0	Does not identify that she is overwhelmed or the stressors that caused being overwhelmed
Where I am right now 1	Does not immediately identify when she is overwhelmed in order to self-advocate for needs to reduce stress
I'm getting close to my goal 2	Identifies that she is overwhelmed but does not self-advocate for needs to reduce stress
I reached my goal! 3	Identifies that she is overwhelmed and self-advocates for needs with appropriate person to reduce stress
I did better than expected! 4	Talking with appropriate person when student identifies situations that may result in her feeling overwhelmed

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How is Data collected?

- How will information be collected, and who will collect it? Ideally, use information from multiple sources:
  - Job Coach observations
  - Student self-reports
  - Employer feedback
  - Classroom teacher input

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INTERACTIVE EXAMPLES

- Let's practice writing G.A.S. Goals!!

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References

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